

# Excerpt of David Botello Interview

[00:00:00] **David Botello:** So when I painted the Dreams of Flight, that little boy in the tire, that's a, that came out of the newspaper.

You know, I saw a picture in there in the newspaper. They had a little boy swinging on a tire. And I had already gotten a wall at Estrada. And so... I wanted to relate to everybody. I was a little tired at the time that everything going up was Indian. Even though I got inspired by the pre-Columbians, everything was farm worker.

I wanted to do something different, you know, I wanted to bring it closer-- right now, you know. So, put the boy in the tire, and had him flying through air, and the circles that go from him, radiate from him. That's why I call it Dreams of Flight, is from his motion, feeling, he dreams about having a toy airplane.

You know, he dreams about being an eagle, [00:01:00] of going to the moon. You know, I put an astronaut on the moon, and there's Aztec warrior, you know, in there reaching for the moon. I put that fantasy figure in there, cause this Aztec warrior has wings coming off of his back. Just to show that we could use our imaginations.

We didn't have to take things right out of the books, pre-Columbian books, and put them on the wall. I took one of the figures and made him more human. And made him doing something... who knows, what if they did fly, you know? So I wanted to relate to the kids. There's a lot of kids there in Estrada, of course.

It's a family housing project. So right about the time I met Wayne, this was two years after I painted at Estrada Courts, I got a job to do a small mural, uh, at the Sloan's Cleaners. And so I was going through a bunch, this was right after [00:02:00] Watergate, and this wall that I got had a telephone booth on the wall, one of those circular blue ones that are attached on a pole.

So I said, well I gotta incorporate that into the mural. So I ended up doing some electronical stuff. Wires coming out of it. And put little cucarachas with heads, headphones on them. Uh, listening to the wire tapping on the telephone, you know. I put a CIA camera up there looking at a family who's looking at TV.

So I put a Chicano family in there. I put all the stereotypes, you know. I put the virgen on the wall. I put the woman with her apron. And she's connected to the kitchen, you know, with a big electrical cord. And the kids are looking at all

American TV where you had the flag and the guns going off and the Latin lover [00:03:00] in the TV, you know.

And the father's drinking his Coors and he has a great, uh, crate there at the table. And behind him though is a boy being inspired by the history of Mexico. Wearing a t shirt that says, you know, End Gang Warfare. But he's sort of being inspired by this electronic energy that comes in the form of Quetzalcoatl, you know.

Pretty political piece, you know. And they have other computers in there and contracts. It says, "Be Careful". Read Between the Lines is the name of that piece.

Yeah. There's a good story there. I went to restore it one day. Cause the wall is a kind of an old wall. It's cracking from underneath. So the paint is cracking. I was not there ten minutes when I was getting my stuff ready, I looked around and there was people coming at me. I knew they were tourists cause they got the camera, they got a [00:04:00] suit, they got a rental car.

And they come up and this lady's got... All kinds of, you know, gold around her neck. But they're talking a French accent. And this guy takes out this Newsweek clipping that he got in France, and he said, is this, is this the mural? Are we at the right spot? You know, his friends wanted to take him to Universal Studios, but he wanted to go see the murals in East L. A. So I got his map out, you know, he gave me a map and I circled all the murals, you know, where he can go find them. But I felt wonderful. Out of the blue, I said, well, let's today, I'll go do this. And I go over there and here, you know, I meet this person, coming from across the world.

Yeah, they spoke in English, [00:05:00] you know. That was pretty neat. But, little things like that, you know, keep you going. Cause you get, I know a lot of artists that are going, that have gone through burnout. You know, and that's a pretty good subject to get into sometimes, you know, with other artists. And we get tired, you know, of it.

But then we, a couple of good breaks come right after each other and it gets you up again, you know. Gives you a reason to carry on. Right now it's a kind of low period around here.

Well, this is what brought our third partner into the picture. George Yepes. Ten years younger than us. And he wasn't even born yet when we were already doing our first mural. How old is he? Why, he's about 26. I'm 30, I'm gonna be

37. So, he came with, he works at the Salesian Boys Club here. [00:06:00]  
And... He's been a really powerful person.

You know, he gets the job done. And he's been a good aid to them up there. There's a lot of monies coming into their center now, from all these private corporations, you know. Doing a lot of good up there.

What do you call that? filling up on ancient energies. Because it's, uh, we like to harmonize with where we're at. That's at a gas station, so we got someone filling up with gas. And we got the petroleum fields with the dinosaurs going into the oil, you know. But we got the books, and we got education coming in.

And then we had the multicultural cruising scene. It's like it was a small wall, you know, it's just a six foot wall, but we said, well, let's get big figures in here, you know. So what we ended up doing was putting the dash, the windows, the front window shields of cars, so, you know, six foot window fields.[00:07:00]

windows that makes pretty big figures inside there, you know. So we got the three cultures, I mean, the, the four cultures. You got Black, uh, Japanese, Anglo, and, and, uh, Mexican. And each of the cars, you know. Uh, Roosevelt High School is right around the corner from there. So we knew a bunch of kids would be there.

So we, just like with Estrada Courts, when we do a mural, and this is something we, me and Wayne have brought it in, something that I've really stressed a lot. It's so long now, and I don't know who to give credit to a lot of these things. You know, a lot of stuff just, individuals bring up stuff and, and it adds to our, our philosophy.

But we try to tailor our mural for where it's at. If we're in the park, you know, we're bound to put something that relates to the park. If you're at a [00:08:00] library, we painted in the East L. A. College Library, and they already gave it, they said, the history of education, you know, past, present, and future. That's a whole lot of stuff.

So we just divided the three walls up into art, into, uh, science, and then philosophy. We got everybody in philosophy from John Lennon to, uh, Jesus Christ, you know, with... Zapata in between, you know? With the White Rabbit and Alice in Wonderland. We got all four races again. We try to, trying to be multicultural, you know?

Trying to reach out across, you know, retrovert type artwork. Cause we're so stereotyped, you know? Trying to break all the stereotypes we can. But still maintain our colors. Our themes.